LABOUR MONTHLY

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GOODBYE, DR. BEECHING

Robert Bonnar

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THE QUEEN IN GERMANY

Quaestor

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RACIALISM AND THE LAW

Ralph Millner, Q.C.

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Students in Action—Phil Goodwin

Ten Years of English Drama—Stuart Douglass

How They Held Down Wages—Angela Tuckett

JULY 1965

Two Shillings

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LABOUR MONTHLY

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CONTENTS

Page

Notes of the Month: A Time for Choice—and Action. *From Persuasion to Threat—Back to Essentials—Programmes Do Count—Defence and Disarmament—Widening the War*.....
Andrew Rothstein 289

Goodbye, Doctor Beeching. Leading Railwayman warns of the danger of continuing Beeching's policy.....**Robert Bonnar** 298

How They Held Down Wages. The effects of the post-war wage freeze on the third Labour Government.....**Angela Tuckett** 302

The Queen in Germany. The unvarnished truth about West Berlin .....**Quaestor** 308

Racialism and the Law. A lawyer exposes the defects in the Race Relations Bill.....**Ralph Millner, Q.C.** 314

Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Conference, 1965. A call for unity of Africa, Asia and Latin America for peace and progress
Pat Sloan 318

Coal, Oil and Britain. *Labour Monthly's* analysis of the 'cost of oil' confirmed.....**R.P.D.** 320

Students in Action. The methods of student militancy.....
Phil Goodwin 322

'Anger' to Despair—Ten Years of English Drama. A dramatist analyses modern trends in the theatre.....**Stuart Douglass** 325

Obituary. I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson. 317

Illustrations. Stop American Aggression in Vietnam. 312-13

Forty Years Ago..... 311

Book Reviews: 'Essays on Economic Policy, Vol. I & II', Nicholas Kaldor: *John Eaton;* 'The Government of Great Britain', G. Moodie and 'Introduction to Politics', D. Pickles: Katherine Hood; 'Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations', Karl Marx: R.P.D.; 'Natsopa—Seventy-Five Years', James Moran: Kay Beauchamp; 'A True Society', F. Tannenbaum; *D. N. Pritt.* 331

Budget for 'L.M'......**Helen Falber** 336

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Notes of the Month

A TIME FOR CHOICE — AND ACTION

Andrew Rothstein

When the 'Declaration of Intent' was adopted by representatives of the employers, the trade union leaders and the Government on December 16, the press was full of jubilation, and Cabinet Ministers' mouths of self-congratulation. A new era was opening. Then the 'norm' of 3 to 3½ per cent wage increase per annum was revealed; and the new era straightaway receded into the background. A conference of trade union executives, it is true, voted for the incomes policy by an enormous majority—but with its tongue very obviously in its cheek (as Andrew Barr made quite clear last month in these pages). Miners, railwaymen, distributive workers, printers, general workers, furnishing workers, foundrymen, boot and shoe operatives—all have since then won or demanded wage rises far above the 'norm'. The Co-operative Congress on June 8 demanded—despite opposition from the Minister of Labour—by 6¾ million to under 4 million that the Government should fulfil Labour pledges by giving women equal pay for equal work: again far above the 'norm'. The immediate reason for the contradiction is perfectly clear: the incessant rise in the cost of living, which no Cabinet Minister, be he Labour or Tory, can ever talk his way round.

From Persuasion to Threat

But the contradiction goes deeper. The Trades Union Congress last September—by an almost unanimous vote of the very unions which endorsed the 'national incomes policy' on April 30 this year—adopted a resolution declaring its opposition to 'an incomes policy which has as its aim the restraint of wages and salaries increases'. Any 'acceptable incomes policy', it declared, must 'be based on social justice'. This would mean 'taking into account all forms of incomes including rent, interest and profit'. The Labour Party's election manifesto likewise promised that its incomes policy would apply 'to profits, dividends and rents. Leave aside for the moment

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the nonsensical proposition that where the economy is controlled by monopoly capitalism it is possible to restrain both wages and profits; but the fact is that no sooner was Mr. Wilson's Government in office than a whittling-away process began. The Queen's speech on November 3 only promised 'a closer relationship between the increase in productivity and the growth of incomes in all their forms'. And for months now, all talk of limiting profits, dividends and rents has disappeared from the mouths of Cabinet Ministers. On the contrary. With occasionally a mild reproof to managements who arbitrarily raise prices, their assurances of friendship are all for the employers, and their heavy fire is against the workers. If the incomes 'exercise' fails, it will have 'tended to prove' that, because of 'indiscipline and selfishness of the people', a 'free society' (*i.e.*, capitalism) cannot exist 'in the way we would wish it to exist', Ray Gunter (Minister of Labour) told 250 industrialists at lunch on May 19. What way? Wait for it. But Mr. Gunter returned again and again in his speech to wage structure, scarifying workers 'who are willing to receive, but not to earn, high wages'. Two days later George Brown (Minister for Economic Affairs) told another 150 industrialists that a very large private enterprise sector was going to continue in Britain 'as long ahead as we can see'. The (capitalist) profit motive therefore had a very important rôle to play—and, provided managements did not raise prices by 'using market power' (whatever that might mean), 'profits are a very good test of efficiency'. But on May 18 the same George Brown had referred a wage increase agreement for 120,000 printing workers to the National Board for Prices and Incomes; and it was revealed on June 2 that he had done so—and had scolded the *employers'* chairman for agreeing to the settlement—because it gave the workers too much. On June 10 it became clear why a Labour Government had appointed a Conservative ex-Minister, Aubrey Jones, to be chairman of the aforesaid Board. Addressing the manufacturers' section of the London Chamber of Commerce, he dwelt at length on the peculiarities of wages settlements in Britain, and—while making the now regular formal reference to the 'sense of social obligation' required when fixing prices—explained that 'the difficulty in keeping prices and costs steady is that increased earnings are not matched with increased productivity': the criterion used is 'What everybody else is having'. Having thus made the workers responsible after all for price increases as well, Mr. Jones allowed a peep at what Ray Gunter had meant in his reference to the way 'we' would wish capitalist society to exist. If public opinion failed to be educated and even won over to the aims of the Board, he said, the alternative

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would be to move on to 'some instrument of sanctions'. Or, as the *Economist* had put it with praiseworthy bluntness a few days before, 'the price of securing an incomes policy in Britain will be a willingness to stand up to strikes' (the following week it outlined a whole scheme of procedure for compulsion—against the unions, of course). Such is the inevitable logic of 'incomes policy' in a capitalist society: and the present is a time when this logic cannot be burked.

Back to Essentials

The Labour Party's election manifesto burked it when promising a national economic plan (called of course 'Socialist planning') which would be formulated 'with both sides of industry', and regional planning boards working in the same way. The Prime Minister burked it (May 27) when he promised both capitalists and workers—masked as those who 'create a virile, vigorous industrial economy'—'their fair share of the rising national dividend'. James Callaghan (Chancellor of the Exchequer) burked it when he said to an I.T.V. interviewer on June 3: 'I am not hostile to the City as long as they earn their keep'. How do 'they'—the big industrial, commercial and financial trusts who make up British monopoly capitalism—earn their keep? By retaining for the owners of British factories and shipyards, of British shipping and large-scale farms, of the mines and factories and plantations which British investors own in colonial or recently-liberated countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the *surplus values* created by the workers in these establishments during the course of material production. Who 'creates' the industrial economy of Great Britain—if not the workers, by hand and brain, who make the machines, the buildings in which they are put up, the power stations and railways which feed them: produce or fetch in the raw material: and then apply their labour to what they have made? What part has the 'other side of industry' (its owners) in the production of these values, what claim can it have to a share in the 'national dividend', the *surplus product* which these means of creating material wealth turn out year by year—except the parasite's claim of ownership of what others have created? This was what the struggle was about in 1959-60 over the object set out in 1918 by Clause 4 of the Labour Party constitution—'to secure for the workers by hand or by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of

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the means of production, distribution and exchange'. And that clause only reproduced what a whole generation of Socialists had preached before 1918, and went on preaching afterwards. To recall these Socialist essentials is even more important when a Labour Government is in office than at any other time.

Programmes Do Count

If the Labour Government's 'incomes policy' in practice means trying to put over a wage freeze, it is not because Cabinet Ministers are personally dishonest, but because they set the essential principles of Socialism at defiance. If, instead of taking the City by the throat last October, when it threatened all manner of disasters should old age pensions be raised at once, Labour Cabinet Ministers postponed this urgent reform for six or more winter months, it was because they find it easier to defy old age pensioners than the big monopolists whom they regard as 'the other side' of industry. If the big words in the Queen's Speech about working for 'more stable prices' and 'special attention to protecting the interests of consumers' have materialised in the shape of rapid price rises of essential consumer goods, this is the fruit of treating the great trusts which dominate the market as just 'one side of industry', to be perhaps argued with about what should be 'its fair share' instead of as robbers of the working people, to be dealt with as burglars are dealt with. If the brave promise on November 4 to 'take action against racial discrimination' has whimpered down to a feeble bleat (coupled in Sir Frank Soskice's draft with an ambiguous and sinister reinforcement of the Public Order Bill, as Ralph Millner points out on page 314), it is because Cabinet Ministers flinch from the conflict with Big Business over racialism which—through the Tory Party—has already come close to becoming a main election issue. These, and other examples which could be taken, all point to one conclusion—that, at bottom, party programmes do count. And if the objection be raised that in 1960 Clause Four was after all reaffirmed, it must be remembered that the price of reaffirmation was acceptance of Hugh Gaitskell's revisionist Twelve Points watering it down (as the Editor pointed out in this journal in November that year)—points which in fact opened loopholes through which the Labour Party's programme and practice could still be made safe for capitalist monopoly. Of what avail, then, are such pathetic appeals to high heaven as that of Douglas Houghton on May 15: 'We imposed a surcharge to curb

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imports, raised Bank Rate to stop the run of sterling, slapped sixpence on the income tax to help pay for pensions, and put restrictions on bank loans'—and still the Tories are not satisfied, just fancy; or for that matter why the dark and sinister hints by George Brown on June 12 about a vast campaign against the Government, a 'tremendous conspiracy of those who have, and who live by having rather than by earning'? It was to appease 'those who have' that the Labour Government has from the beginning adopted its policies. If Oliver now asks for more, where's the wonder?

Defence and Disarmament

In the Government's relations with other countries, the right-wing Cabinet Ministers have dictated the same pattern. 'From now on, defence expenditure at home and abroad must be strictly related to what the country can afford', proclaimed the Prime Minister at the Labour Party Conference on December 13. And straight away defence expenditure went up from under £2,000 million to £2,100 million, a record total in peacetime. Was it because the country could afford the money? On the contrary: rising prices and taxes and rents, declining fortunes of sterling, showed the opposite. Some seventy Labour M.P.s drew the obvious conclusion, at the beginning of June, when Ellis Smith on their behalf tabled a motion asking for cuts in military expenditure in Germany aimed at saving at least £100 million a year by 1966, and thereafter to cut military expenditure by at least £200 million annually. There is not the least sign that the Government is accepting their proposal. On the contrary. As has been repeatedly shown in these columns, the policy of armed aggression against colonial peoples 'East of Suez' is being pursued to uphold British investments, and involves continuation, probably increase, of military expenditure. This is made certain by the Labour Government's arms policy. For what does Mr. Wilson's 'Atlantic Nuclear Force' portend—notwithstanding his constant assurances (*e.g.*, on May 3) that it has 'built-in safeguards against proliferation' —if not that the ex-Nazis who proliferate in the West German Cabinet and Bundeswehr High Command will gain access to nuclear technical secrets enabling them to have a finger on their *own*, separately-built, purely German, nuclear trigger? And what must that bring, if not a nuclear arms race? The Government said in the Queen's Speech that it would 'encourage further progress towards disarmament'. Has it shown the least inclination to support,

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for example, the Soviet draft resolution at the United Nations Disarmament Commission on June 1, for a special conference within 12 months to ban the use of nuclear weapons, and (pending its decisions) for the nuclear Powers to declare that they would not be the first to use such weapons? On the contrary. When the American representative said he would vote against it, Mr. Wilson's representative obediently toed the line. On June 11 the Commission voted—with 16 abstentions—to call a world conference on disarmament: 'in spite of objections voiced by the United States, the United Kingdom and others', *The Times* correspondent reports (June 12), though according to the *Guardian* the British delegate voted in the end with the majority. In fact, no single initiative for disarmament put forward by the Soviet Union, none of the Polish proposals for areas of disengagement or even nuclear 'freezing' in Europe and elsewhere, have received the slightest support from the Labour Government. On the contrary: hints are appearing that it has abandoned the support of the Polish proposals explicitly stated in the election manifesto. Despite the election programme which promised 'to strengthen the United Nations' and revive its 'morale', and despite the Queen's Speech, which promised 'to contribute to other steps which will permit the east-west conflict to be replaced by international co-operation', the Government has meekly followed the United States in maintaining the dispute in the United Nations over the 'peace-keeping' expenditure in the Congo (!), to which the Soviet Union refused to contribute because it was illegally voted by a majority in the Assembly, contrary to the Charter's provisions. Yet this (as *The Times* correspondent noted on June 2) is likely to make this year's 20th Assembly session 'as futile as the 19th session was': and 'the earlier east-west detente has been largely dissipated'. More than this: just as the United States militarists in 1950 took advantage of Soviet absence from the Security Council to launch the Korean war, so today they are manifestly taking advantage of the paralysis of the United Nations, which they themselves—and their wretched satellite in London, a Labour Government now as then—brought about, to defy world opinion by their increasing aggression in Vietnam.

Widening the War

Since Hitler's aggressions of 1936-39, encouraged by the lies and sophistries of the British Government about the perils of Communism, there has been no such brazen spectacle of unashamed

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murderous attack on small peoples, for the sake of their natural resources, of bullying claim to determine what government they shall have, as the United States war in Vietnam and its invasion of Dominica. The Labour Government has lost no opportunity of loyally backing both aggressions, and has earned some appropriate epithets accordingly in various quarters—'servile' (*Guardian,* June 11), 'President Johnson's obedient poodle' (Jeremy Thorpe, Liberal M.P., June 13), 'a policy which is hateful to the Labour movement' (*Sunday Citizen,* the same day). But the real peril, at the time of writing, is less the demonstration that the Labour Government, here too, is deserting all its election pledges than that of extension of the war. Here is the Washington correspondent of *The Times* writing (one of many frank messages) on June 8: 'By almost any standards the war has already been lost. The Vietcong hold most of the countryside' (an excellent map in the *Daily Worker* of June 12 illustrated this vividly), 'and its strength is increasing. The South Vietnam Army is weary and weakened by desertion' (and very likely is encouraged by the frequency with which its American 'advisers', when the troops come under fire from the Liberation Army, are gallantly 'evacuated by helicopter': the latest case reported while these lines were being written, on June 13). 'In Saigon there is little hope of establishing a viable civilian government, and the United States is treating with the war lords.' That very day, the State Department announced that American troops in South Vietnam had been authorised to engage directly in offensive operations themselves. The revelation made even *The Times* shudder: 'It will represent a qualitative change in the war'—one of a series of steps which, like its predecessors, 'amounts to a recognition that the previous step has failed'. Critics at home and abroad 'fear that by supporting an unstable and unpopular government in South Vietnam and bombing a sovereign country to the north, the United States is eroding its moral standing, the credibility of its intentions and the future prospects for Vietnam' (June 10). This carefully mealy-mouthed language, of course, did not do justice to the United States atrocity piled on atrocity. Then came (June 13) unmistakeable hints from British correspondents in Washington of an early increase in the American invading forces to 100,000, and of direct American co-operation with South Vietnam generals in creating a new military government, should 'defeatists' replace the discredited puppets at Saigon. In plain language, this would mean that all pretence of not waging war on the Vietnam people would be thrown aside. But

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(wrote the *Daily Telegraph* diplomatic correspondent on June 10) 'ministers in London appear to be continuing to give calm support to American policy'. Whitehall reaction (wrote the political correspondent of *The Times*) 'left the impression that Mr. Wilson and his senior colleagues are—almost above all else—determined to see that events in South Vietnam should not weaken the Government's relationship with the Johnson Administration'. The *Observer* editorial appealed (June 13) to the Government not to 'appear to be simply hanging on to President Johnson's coat-tails'—an indirect way of saying that that was precisely the continuing attitude of Whitehall. No hints about 'certain consultations' and further 'temporary halts in the bombing' could alter this situation. And only a reactionary, General de Gaulle, had the courage to say, on June 10, that the Americans were involved in a 'dirty affair' in Vietnam.

Back to Essentials Again

Support of the American war on the people of Vietnam—and of American invasion of Dominica—is of course an integral part of the policy which keeps British troops in Aden, in Malaysia and in British Guiana. It is the military expression of the spirit of Nato and Seato: the spirit which proclaims that British investors' money is sacred, that it is menaced wherever there is a danger of 'Communism' (meaning not only Socialist expropriation of Big Business, as when Bevin in 1948 stopped nationalisation of heavy industry in West Germany, but colonial peoples throwing out their exploiters)—and therefore that British policy, whether Labour-controlled or Tory-controlled, will always be available on the side of any other reactionary government, whether in South Arabia or in Wall Street. By the time this issue of our journal is on sale, the great Parliamentary Lobby of June 30 against Wilson's support of the dirty Vietnam war will be on. Everything that can make it a victorious blow at this great menace to world peace, and to follow it up, should be done. Hundreds of thousands of people who are not Socialists, who have not thought everything out but are revolted by Britain backing America's aggression, will be supporting the Lobby and every other similar manifestation afterwards. But for Socialists, and especially for readers of *Labour Monthly*, there should be more to think of. The principles of socialism impose drawing *all* the lessons from such struggles, going deeper into the causes of things. Is it an accident that the programme of the Labour Party could attract into its ranks,

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not only a vast majority of the organised workers by hand and brain who really want Britain to change fundamentally for the better, but also a relative handful of people who want *at bottom* to keep her as she is, ruled by big business but somewhat cleaned up—and that they could rise to the main Cabinet posts in a Labour Government? No, it is not an accident, any more than the *Daily Worker*'s being the only newspaper in Britain which has fought the dirty war from the beginning. The programme of the Communist Party, the *British Road to Socialism*, provides no such channels of access, as the Labour Party programme, for the champions of 'both sides of industry' and of 'the world of free enterprise': but it does give the certainty to Socialists of being able to pull their full weight in the fight for Socialism—'common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange'—and for all the sorely-needed immediate changes on the way, at home and in foreign policy, which will make Socialism in Britain possible.

That some immediate change is imperative cannot be doubted. The Gallup Poll result, published on June 10, showed Labour support falling from $44\frac{3}{4}$ per cent at the General Election to $42\frac{1}{2}$ per cent just before Parliament adjourned on June 5, while Tory support increased from 43 to 47 per cent over the same period. The reasons for this improvement in the Tory chances are only too obvious. If ever there was a time for united immediate action, irrespective of long range choice, it is the time when the combination of national incomes policy and high prices, nuclear armaments piling up and war raging in Vietnam, threatens the people of Britain as they have not been threatened for many years.

June 15, 1965

The Editor will resume the Notes of the Month in the next issue.

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GOODBYE, DOCTOR BEECHING

Robert Bonnar

Executive Committee Member, National Union of Railwaymen

THERE cannot be a single railwayman in this country but must feel relieved to see Dr. Beeching pack his bags and go back to the Imperial Chemical Industries. Appointed by the Tory Government as Chairman of the British Railways Board, with a salary of £24,000 a year, he has left the industry, in our opinion, in a very much worse condition than it was when he appeared on the scene some four years ago. He has left the whole railway network like a huge battlefield, casualties strewn about everywhere; hundreds of stations and several main workshops have been closed, 2,000 miles of track torn up, the waggon fleet cut down by 300,000 and the staff has been reduced by more than 100,000. Those who remain are still cowering anxiously in fear of the next blow.

Some Executive Members of the National Union of Railwaymen, including the President, have been declared redundant. The jobs they left to take up office, will not be there for them to go back to. Tens of thousands of people, whole communities in some instances, have had the only dependable transport service they have ever known taken away from them. Fares have been pushed up to a level which makes rail travel a luxury.

The worst feature of the present situation is that while Beeching has chosen to clear out, his successor has threatened to pursue the same policy. What is even worse, much worse, few worked harder to return the Labour Government than those thousands of railwaymen up and down the whole length and breadth of the country who have been struggling to save their jobs and their services since Beeching made his appearance. Yet, this Government has done nothing to reverse the disastrous policy of their predecessors.

This attitude, unless changed, and changed quickly, could cost Labour the next election. But despite the pressure brought to bear on Tom Fraser, Minister of Transport, from the Railway Trade Unions, Sectional Councils, local authorities, Labour, Liberal and even Tory M.P.s, his own plea is that, with passenger closures, the 1962 Act denies him the right to revoke any of the decisions taken by Marples, his predecessor, and with freight closures, he claims he cannot interfere. These, he informs us, fall within the sacred province of Management. On the other hand, Management can seemingly do as they please in the nationalised railway industry. They

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can even de-nationalise a part of it and sell that part to a private firm, as they have done with the only quarry owned by the industry, Meldon Quarry in Devon. When we complain to the Minister he simply remonstrates that he cannot encroach on the functions of management. No wonder the railwaymen are so angry and disappointed with this Government!

When this Labour Government was returned in October last year, we in the Railway Trade Unions had every reason to believe that the tremendous campaign we had staged all over the country against the Tory-inspired 'Beeching Plan' would at last bring positive results. Surely we are entitled to expect that the 'Beeching Plan' would be halted, at least until Lord Hinton's national survey of the country's transport needs had been completed. Labour candidates told us so throughout their election campaigns. Now we are told that while such promises might have been given by some Labour candidates, there was no such undertaking given in Labour's *Election Manifesto*.

This is a very despicable form of political chicanery, particularly when there is so much involved for so many people. Those candidates, some of whom are now M.P.s, who made this issue the main plank in their election campaigns, are being made to feel and appear dishonest in the eyes of the nation. The whole image of our labour movement is being made dubious and suspect because of the Government's behaviour towards the nationalised railways.

Despite all we have heard about Beeching's assignment by the Tory Government, he was vested with tremendous authority and had he been a man of courage and conviction he could have used that authority to restore rail transport to its proper role, bringing rail travel once more within the reach of the ordinary traveller and developing services which would have greatly reduced the hazards and congestion on our roads. But he has made a muddle of freight planning, with the worst still to come; our lads on the job tell us there will be a real crisis next winter as we are now without the vehicles to carry the traffic we will be called upon to carry. Through his policy of indiscriminate closure and withdrawal he has worsened the service for everybody. He had repeatedly pushed up the level of fares and light freight charges. He has filled every railwayman's life full of uncertainty and frustration, undermining their confidence, destroying that pride they once took in their job. The money-lenders and speculators are sitting as heavily on our backs today as they were when Beeching took over. He has done nothing to remove the stranglehold these people have on our nationalised industry. He seemed anxious and impatient to strengthen their grip.

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There are a number of examples of this, but the most topical is the liner train project. Many have been deceived into believing that the N.U.R. is against liner trains. Nothing can be farther from the truth. In spite of Beeching, we have managed to bring about some considerable improvements in passenger services in and between most of the big and busy centres; due entirely to the 1955 Modernisation Plan. With the liner train service we can do as much on the freight side, greatly improving the safety and mobility on our roads by relieving them of much of the long-distance traffic that these trains are being specially built to carry. What we are against is the basis on which Marples and Beeching decided to have these trains introduced. At first there were a number of points of difference between us. Now there are two. First, we want to maintain our reputation of having the safest railways in the world by insisting that there be a brakevan and guard on each of these trains. And secondly, we are against private road hauliers being allowed into the liner train terminals. Non-stop journeys of up to 400 miles at speeds of 75 m.p.h. are being planned for the liner trains. Nobody has been able to convince us that such trains, carrying such loads, and travelling at such speeds, can be worked with that high degree of safety to which we are accustomed, without a guard carrying out his traditional duties from a brakevan in accordance with our accepted code of rules. Against the safety value of the brakevan, the few tons lost in the capacity load, and the few minutes lost at the terminals is, in our opinion, well worth while.

On the question of open terminals, we have strongly opposed this concept from the moment the liner train idea was first mooted. Our industry has for too long been shamefully exploited, with Government connivance, by outside private interests. On this issue we are being asked to go beyond the limit. When complete, the liner train project will cost £100 million. Knowing where that money must ultimately come from, we feel it is in the best interests of our members, our publicly-owned industry and the nation as a whole, to resist private interests being allowed to use such a costly service for their own private gain. We have taken our stand against being relegated to the level of sub-contractors to private road hauliers.

With the tremendous resources of this great publicly-owned industry, we are confident that the liner train service can be made a real asset to the nation. The Tory Government laid down the condition that we should go cap-in-hand to the private road hauliers, begging them to hand over some of their trunk-route traffic to us,

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giving them the guarantee that they, in return, would continue to have the initial haul of the traffic from its source to the rail head, with full scope to dictate from such a position of strength what their margin of profit will be. What would this mean for our road haulage fleet? To accept such an arrangement would be contrary to everything we stand and strive for. We made clear to the Tory Government that our members could never be expected to co-operate on such a basis in making these trains the success we know they can be. The Tories took some heed. They instructed the British Railways Board that before authority could be given to go ahead with the scheme, they must first be assured of co-operation from the Railway Unions. It was quite inconceivable that the new Labour Minister of Transport would line himself up behind Tory policy against the policy of the N.U.R., but he has! Had he adopted a socialist outlook towards these trains we could and would have promised him the unqualified support of our entire membership.

We are proud of our policy on liner trains. What we want is in the best interests of our membership, our industry, and our country. None of us ever suspected that Tom Fraser would take such a line of action. He went further than Marples was prepared to go. He has told the Railways Board to go ahead with the liner trains whether they can get agreement with the Railway Unions or not. Yet some have the audacity to suggest that the N.U.R. is moving towards a head-on clash with both the Government and the Railways Board. Such a clash is not of our seeking. The guilt of the present situation does not lie at our door. Our policy and our reasons for it have been made crystal clear on more occasions than one to the Minister and the Board. As Socialists we want to see our nationalised industry, for which we have paid and are still paying so much, being run in the interests of the people, not further exploited for the profit of a few.

A properly co-ordinated transport system is the aim of the N.U.R. It always has been. With our roads in their present state of chaos, on which nearly 8,000 people are slaughtered every year, every sane person must surely feel with a strong sense of urgency the desperate need for such an end being attained. This can never be brought about by continuing the Beeching policy of closures where profitability, and not social need, is the criterion. Nor can it be brought about by spending £100 million of public money on the finest freight service on wheels possible for this country, and at the same time putting it at the disposal of private hauliers who are against the public ownership of transport.

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HOW THEY HELD DOWN WAGES

Angela Tuckett

THE first post-war wage freeze began in 1947 and was finally ended at the Trades Union Congress in September, 1950. No one will ever know just how much, in those three years, was lost to the workers in wages—and gained by the employers in profits. Not only did it play a big part in bringing down the third Labour Government; as Andrew Barr pointed out last month, it also 'brought the trade unions into disrepute'. After eighteen years, despite modern twists, a look back at its main features may prove instructive.

By the end of 1946 the postwar economic crises were beginning to show what became the pattern, under pressure of the economic offensive from the United States, and subservience to its policy. Profits and capital appreciation were rising steeply; expenditure on 'overseas commitments' was beginning to mount; the deficit in the balance of payments was already over £400 million. White Papers* were published in February, 1947, calling for increased 'output per man year' and increased export targets to reduce dollar expenditure, with the broad hint that ' moderation' in wage claims was needed to make exports 'competitive'. On July 15, 1947 the Americans had forced sterling to become freely convertible. The run on it began. When Parliament rose on August 7, 1947, Prime Minister Attlee appealed to workers not to press wage claims; he announced cuts in imports and the stepping up of exports. On August 20 Members were hastily recalled for a day to suspend convertibility. A week after the 1947 Trades Union Congress at Southport had accepted a proposal to renew direction of labour to 'essential employment', a Special Conference of trade union executives was called on September 12, 1947. Sir Stafford Cripps addressed the delegates, many of whom must have recalled his speech at the 1937 Labour Party Conference, when he was under threat of expulsion for his part as leader of the Socialist League in the joint Unity Campaign with the Independent Labour Party and the Communist Party. Now, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he put forward 'The Cripps Plan' to increase exports by a third and make big cuts in the capital investment desperately needed for modernisation. He said:

> We do not want to reduce the workers' earnings, indeed, we would gladly see them go up if production increased in line with them. But I am certain that we cannot look to higher standards through ever-rising spirals of prices and wages.

*Economic Considerations Affecting the Relation Between Employers and Workers (Cmd. 7018); Economic Survey for 1947 (Cmd. 7046).

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The Cripps Plan was endorsed. The Labour Government asked the Trades Union Congress leaders 'to give very serious consideration to the possibilities of securing some greater stability of wages'.

Things got worse. During 1947, gold and dollar reserves fell by £1,023 million; the current deficit was £675 million. On December 30, 1947, the Trades Union Congress General Council circulated an *Interim Report on the Economic Situation,* which

> strongly recommended the responsible executive committees of trade unions to exercise even greater moderation and restraint than hitherto in the formulation and pursuit of claims.

This was quickly followed by another Government White Paper, on *Personal Incomes, Costs and Prices* (Cmd 7321) on February 4, 1948. This was the blue print for 'wage restraint', just as Mr. George Brown's *Intent* is today. Its line of argument was that wage increases without increased output would 'only lead to an increase in the inflationary pressure on prices'. Therefore the White Paper asked acceptance for the

> general principle that there should be a temporary stop to further increases in personal incomes from whatever sources they are obtained.

There was 'no justification for *any* further increases in income from rent, profits or other like sources'. But it admitted 'the justice and necessity' for wage increases 'in certain cases'.

So there it was; the impression was given that whilst profits would be sternly dealt with, there would be loopholes through which dexterous leaders might squeeze their own members. The T.U.C. General Council recommended its acceptance if regard was had to five principles to cover allowable exceptions:

> Claims based on increased output;
> Claims adjusting wages 'below a reasonable standard of subsistence';
> Claims to attract manpower to under-manned essential industries;
> Claims to safeguard wage differentials 'to sustain those standards of craftsmanship, training and experience that contribute directly to industrial efficiency and higher productivity';
> Collective bargaining and free negotiations to be unimpaired.

They insisted that the White Paper was

> not a law imposing rigid and specific restrictions upon wage claims and negotiations; it is a request to trade unions to restrain wage claims within the principles.

Supporters of 'wage restraint' have always insisted there is no 'freeze'. Unions were at all times, they claim, *free* to put in demands: and of course they did. Moreover, the General Council only recommended acceptance of the policy, which they would review each quarter,

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on condition that the Government pursues vigorously and firmly a policy designed *not only to stabilise but to reduce profits and prices.*

With these faith-inducing assurances, a further Special Conference of trade union executives on March 24, 1948, carried acceptance of the White Paper by 5,421,000 to 2,032,000.

It was not long before the consequences began to show and the long uphill fight back had to begin. In April, 1948 the Labour Government asked wages councils to 'bear in mind' the new incomes policy—and they did. The Federation of British Industries and the wholesalers' and retailers' organisations were invited to co-operate voluntarily in reducing prices, limiting profits and refrain from declaring more dividends than in the previous year. The 1948 budget doubled profits tax but also added to indirect taxation. Prices went up. So did profits. As the General Council stated in their Report to Congress in September, 1948:

> Profits generally had remained at a very high level. Indeed, the reported profits in many cases have constituted a record.

However, the Labour Government's standpoint was that

> legislation directly to limit profits could be contemplated, *if at all,* only after other and more promising methods had failed.

The T.U.C. General Council

> also recognised that it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to reduce profits by direct legal limitation.

That remained the standpoint down the years.

When the T.U.C. met at Margate in September, 1948, Sir Stafford Cripps addressed the delegates before the wages debate. His speech was described by Harry Pollitt as

> the most outstanding example of class collaboration that has been advocated and practised since the Swansea T.U.C. of 1928, and not a few delegates recalled to mind the disastrous consequences that followed as a result of the adoption of the Mond-Turner policy in that year.
>
> ('The Margate Conference', *Labour Monthly,* October 1948.)

The Chancellor dwelt on 'the spiral of inflation', deplored 'all those old-fashioned rules and regulations that can hamper a higher efficiency', and dilated on the 'national cake', that figment so favoured by Tory economist propagandists:

> If a lot of people want a larger share they can only get it by taking it away from others. There is only one way by which we can with a given volume of employment increase our real standard of living and that is by each of us producing more, or in other words, putting up our productivity.

When Walter Stevens, General Secretary of the Electrical Trades Union, moved the main resolution in opposition, he pointed out to this leading advocate of restraint that 'a very substantial slice' of the

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national cake included 'profits and interest not distributed as dividends'. His union's resolution reminded Congress that support had been 'conditional upon the reduction of prices and curtailment of profits'; and called upon the Government 'to introduce statutory control of profits and dividends', and not to stabilise wages at their inadequate level. Although support came from the vehicle builders, foundry workers, engineers, fire brigades, supervisory staffs and civil service and others, it was defeated by 2,184,000 to 5,207,000. Whilst some speakers came to the rostrum to support the General Council —general and municipal workers, shop assistants and notably, Arthur Deakin for the transport and general workers—other big battalions stood mute, the miners, the railwaymen and all unions in the building trade.

The T.U.C. had met in an atmosphere of intense cold war, when McCarthyism was rampant in the United States, and its influence had spread to Britain: it was still raging the following year. But during 1948 prices had risen further and many wage claims were put in by unions which had supported, and continued to support officially, the policy of wage restraint. Profits again soared and there were big bonus share issues. Companies showed 'very high rates of earnings', admitted the General Council's Report to the 1949 Trades Union Congress in Bridlington, at which Jim Mortimer of the draughtsmen remarked:

> Far from profits being reduced, they had not even been stabilised.

He spoke of the urgent need to reduce prices; yet in the Report this was 'not so much emphasised as minimised'. Once again the main resolution in opposition was put down by the Electrical Trades Union. Again urging statutory control of profits, Walter Stevens called for a statutory obligation to disclose what companies were putting to reserves and insist upon justification; and he suggested a 'Profits Arbitration Tribunal', which Sir Vincent Tewson, the predecessor of George Woodcock, dismissed as no solution. Wage restraint was again supported, by 6,485,000 to 1,038,000. Prime Minister Attlee had addressed the delegates before this debate, saying that wage demands 'not matched by increases of production will gravely impair our chances of getting rapidly over our difficulties'. That was on Wednesday, September 7, 1949, while talks were proceeding in Washington. On September 18 the Chancellor announced the devaluation of the pound. Prices of course rose. The T.U.C.'s General Council at once urged 'even greater restraint'. On November 23, 1949 they declared that even in the case of low-paid workers 'rigorous restraint' was needed; and they called for the sus-

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pension of cost of living sliding scale agreements. There was no word about profits nor prices. The ferment in the factories over wages burst into the trade union branches and lodges. A real storm began to rise; everywhere it began to be realised that the loopholes were being blocked up. A Special Conference of trade union executives on January 12, 1950 supported the General Council by only 4,263,000 to 3,606,000; now amongst the minority, the miners in the Areas had overturned their National Executive's previous decision.

At this moment, Parliament was dissolved; and a General Election took place on February 23, 1950. The Labour Government was returned by the narrowest margin—until that time. For the magnificent majority of 180, won in 1945 when the Tory group was reduced to its lowest since 1906, had fallen to an overall majority of 6. The storm over wages and cost of living grew; the unions with sliding scale agreements pressed claims. Collective bargaining was affected; differentials were endangered. A hurricane of demands was expressed at the trade union conferences that spring and summer. The T.U.C.'s General Council fought a rearguard action; on June 28, 1950 a new statement was issued, still endorsing the policy, but saying that it was 'inevitable and essential to have more flexibility within the policy of wage restraint'. This statement came three days after the war in Korea began, when world prices rose to new heights; within six months Britain's arms bill had leapt to the then unheard of figure of £1,600 million.

It was in a different atmosphere that delegates gathered at Brighton that autumn of 1950. Early in the week the Labour Prime Minister addressed the delegates. Lord Attlee called for sacrifices, which should be 'fairly borne', and stressed the continued

> need for restraint. There is still that danger, which you all know so well, of an inflationary spiral. I would reiterate that warning again today, especially as it will be manifest to all of you that this danger is increased by the additional expenditure on armaments which we have been obliged to undertake.

Then he sharply attacked the trade unions 'in the countries that are Communist-controlled', which were 'servile instruments of the ruling bureaucracy'. In other countries, he said,

> adherents of that creed enter only to disrupt. They are not out to serve the interests of the members but of the external forces to which they give allegiance. . . . They persuade honest workers to actions detrimental to themselves and their country.

Two days later came the all-important debate on wages. Walter Stevens moved a resolution protesting that 'no effective steps had

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been taken to prevent this continued trend of increased profits'. Back in January, 1950, his union had submitted a comprehensive scheme by which the statutory control of profits could be brought about, which included cutting into soaring profits to reduce prices and increase wages. This the T.U.C.'s General Council had pronounced 'impracticable'. The resolution declared that

> until such time as there is a reasonable limitation of profits, a positive planning of our British economy and prices are subject to such control as will maintain the purchasing power of wages at a level affording to every worker a reasonable standard of living, there can be no basis for a restraint on wage applications.

It therefore asked the General Council to 'abandon any further policy of wage restraint' and called on the Government to 'introduce statutory control of profits'.

On Thursday, September 7, 1950, this famous resolution was carried by 3,949,000 to 3,727,000; and the Report was defeated.

It had taken three years. A heavy price had to be paid, in deep disillusionment, despite the determined struggle of the left. Yet control of ever-rising profits and prices was still opposed at the Blackpool Congress in September, 1951. Here the guest was Hugh Gaitskell, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, who urged wage restraint again and explained how he proposed, in the autumn, tax methods having failed, to introduce some measure of statutory limitation of dividends, although not of undistributed profits. But a month later, before the autumn leaves had fallen, came the General Election in which the Tories were returned to power.

Ahead lay an arms bill which was to be increased to still greater heights; prices and profits mounted yet further; stop-go, credit squeezes and capital cuts; 'guiding lights'; Neddy, Nicky; and finally *The Intent*, introduced by a Labour Government returned with an overall majority of 4, after 13 painful years of Tory rule.

DID YOUR TRADE UNION BRANCH see the article by Andrew Barr, President of the Sheet Metal Workers' Union, entitled 'INCOMES POLICY'? There are still a few copies available at reduced rates for trade union branches—apply to: The Manager, 134, Ballards Lane, London, N.3.

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THE QUEEN IN GERMANY

Quaestor

ON May 27, in a speech on a West Berlin square, the Queen said: 'The courage and persistence of the people (of West Berlin) and your tremendous achievements, in spite of every difficulty, are a glowing inspiration to the whole free world'.

Unfortunately for the people who had written the Queen's speech, the *Daily Telegraph* that very morning ruthlessly exposed the pretence about 'tremendous achievements'. Reginald Peck, in a feature article, wrote (and wherever he said 'city', he meant West Berlin):

> The glitter of the Kurfürstendamm is a façade supported by an economy that could not by itself survive the night. With direct aid from the Bonn Government, and indirect aid in the form of tax relief amounting in all to some 40 per cent of the city budget, there is not a single undertaking in the city operating on normal commercial lines. For instance, millions have been spent in giving a city whose road traffic is only a fraction of what it should be the finest network of throughways in Europe.

All this keeps up employment, remarked Mr. Peck—and well he might. What a difference it would make to London's housing problem, for example, if some outside power subsidised the rates to the tune of 40 per cent! But this is not all the story he told.

Special inducements have been provided for those—especially young people—who will stay and work in West Berlin. 'Premiums were offered to those who stayed more than a year, and £300 loans to young couples getting married that could be written off when they had children. Four children within 10 years—and the loan was repaid entirely'. 'Berliners are also paid up to £1 a week "danger money" for being in the front line, and tax concessions enable them to get their *schnapps* and all sorts of things cheaper than their fellow-countrymen'.

Mr. Peck could not give in detail all the artificial props which the West Berlin economy receives: 1,250 million marks (well over £100 millions) every year from the West German Government, in spite of not being a part of West Germany; special subsidies to civil air lines from the west into West Berlin; 25 West Berlin factories producing war material for the West German army (Bundeswehr), and much else. But he had said quite a lot.

The Queen also commented: 'Nowhere is the tragedy of a divided world made more evident than in this city'. But who divided Berlin? Her speech-writers took good care not to put in anything about that. Older readers of *Labour Monthly* will remember the series of ex-

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posures we printed in 1948 and 1949. But for those who do not, these are the essential facts.

By a four-Power agreement on September 12, 1944, revised on November 14 the same year and on July 26, 1945, Germany for purposes of occupation was divided into four zones (Soviet, British, American and French), and Berlin—which had been taken exclusively by Soviet forces—was given an Inter-Allied Authority and four occupation zones, in spite of being deep in the heart of the Soviet zone of Germany.

On August 2, 1945, the Potsdam Agreement between the four Allies laid down that (apart from war criminals to be judged separately) influential supporters and officials of Nazi organisations and institutions were to be arrested and interned; other members of the Nazi party 'who have been more than nominal participants in its activities' were to be removed from all public and semi-public office and from responsible posts in private undertakings; and cartels, trusts and other monopolies were to be eliminated. Detailed directives developing the first two points were issued by the Inter-Allied Authority on February 26, 1946. These provisions were strictly carried out in the Soviet zone of Germany. They were flagrantly and impudently flouted in the British, French and American zones from 1945 onwards, and there have been many unimpeachable witnesses to prove it.

As a result, and contrary to the Potsdam provision that 'during the period of occupation, Germany shall be treated as a single economic unit', the zones of the three western Powers by 1946 were already laying the foundations of a revived monopoly-capitalist régime in western Germany—with Nazis in positions of command. In December, 1946 the British and United States Governments decided to fuse their West German zones into what became known as 'Bizonia', and in February, 1948 to admit the French zone, making it into 'Trizonia'.

On June 20, 1948, a separate West German currency was introduced into all three of these zones, instead of the all-German occupation marks which had circulated hitherto. At the same time, to put the Soviet authorities off their guard, the western military commanders assured them that the new currency would not be introduced into western Berlin. This was an obvious necessity, since (as the Soviet commandant wrote the same day), 'the introduction of two currencies in Berlin would not only undermine the economy and the circulation of money within the territory of Greater Berlin, which is situated in the Soviet zone of occupation and economically forms

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part of this zone, but would also damage the economy of the Soviet zone of occupation'.

But the Allied commanders' assurance was a barefaced lie and confidence trick, worthy of cheap welshers on a racecourse. Three days later the same western military authorities announced the introduction of their new marks into West Berlin as well, obviously hoping to inflict the utmost damage on the economy of the Soviet zone. The authorities there had to reply at once with an improvised new currency, and to establish traffic controls around West Berlin to ensure that the outrage of June 23 should not disrupt the economy of the Soviet zone—including that of most of Berlin.

Immediately a well-prepared howl was launched about a 'Soviet blockade', and an airlift of foodstuffs and even coal was started, allegedly to 'save' West Berliners from hunger and cold. In reality, the people of West Berlin were given full opportunity to come and buy what they needed in the Soviet zone, and special supplies were stocked for the purpose. But the western authorities prevented them from going over the border. As Dulles explained to pressmen, it was to the western Powers' advantage to keep up the pretence of a Soviet 'blockade'.

As late as August 30, 1948, representatives of the four Powers agreed that (i) the western currency should be withdrawn from Berlin, which should use the Soviet zone currency instead (ii) the Soviet traffic controls would be withdrawn. But the western Powers welshed again, and refused to carry out their side of the agreement.

Berlin remained divided—by the capitalist Powers. Next year the division of Germany was completed—by the capitalist Powers, setting up in western Germany a government after their own heart. This was under the postwar Labour Government. No wonder the present Labour Government put into the Queen's mouth a tribute to such a 'tremendous achievement'.

Of course the swindle of the 'difficulties' encountered by West Berlin pales into insignificance compared with the 'task to defend civilisation' and 'peaceful reunification'—with the help of the Nazi generals, Nazi Ministers and high officials, Nazi judges and police chiefs and prosecutors who run the machinery of State in West Germany—about which the Queen's speechwriters put more warm words into her mouth on her arrival in Bonn on May 18. But on this we need only contrast the comments, on May 8, of Wladyslaw Gomulka, Polish Prime Minister, speaking to a people who lost six million dead—222 out of every 1,000 Polish citizens—at the hands of the blackguards whose surviving military were foremost among

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the high-rankers assembled to greet Queen Elizabeth II:

At the end of 1964, the West German Bundeswehr numbered 429,000 men. Equipped with rockets capable of delivering atomic warheads supplied by the United States, the Bundeswehr is constantly improving its striking force. The next stage is to be the arming of the Bundeswehr with nuclear weapons.

The core of the Bundeswehr command comprises Nazi officers and generals, who are also on the staffs of the Atlantic Pact. During the last five years, the military budget of the F.G.R. has grown threefold, attaining the sum of 19,000 million marks (over £1,700 millions) annually.

Such is reality.

Contrary to what was proclaimed by the Potsdam agreement, German militarism has been reborn in the Federal German Republic, and is flourishing as in its best Nazi times. It happened like this because the western Powers, the United States above all, betrayed the principles of the Potsdam Agreement and the obligations resulting from it, raised the outworn banner of anti-Communism and under this banner formed the Atlantic Treaty. They helped to transform Western Germany into an imperialist German State.

Now, is this not a 'glowing inspiration to the whole free world'?

LABOUR MONTHLY FORTY YEARS AGO

There is a grim passage in Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* where Peer, the hero, escaping from the subterranean fastness of the Troll King, finds his path barred by an omnipresent Thing: It is called the Great Boyg.

The workers of Europe today also find their path to freedom blocked by a Great Boyg—the ossified structure of Social-Democracy . . . nowhere more manifest than in its obstruction of the movement for international trade union unity. . . . It has not scrupled to employ all the weapons of misrepresentation, insult, and chicane at its command. . . . It was in the atmosphere of mutual distrust and hostility engendered by these attacks that the February meeting of the General Council of the I.F.T.U. took place. An intransigent resolution was proposed by Mr. Oudegeest . . . that there was no use in continuing the correspondence with the Russian Unions, and thus wrote finis to the Unity negotiations. Against this die-hard resolution Mr. Bramley . . . observed with a fine irony:

In various countries you find capitalist Governments negotiating to get an agreement with Russia, capitalist combines discussing trade agreements with Russia . . . we shall look very well—shall we not?—as an International Federation marching behind capitalist groups, marching behind capitalist Governments, hurrying to catch up to them on account of agreements that have been reached with Russia. . . . It appears to me that you can discuss any other subject under the sun without getting into that panicky state of trembling fear and excitement and almost savage ferocity which you get into when you are discussing Russian affairs. . . . Get rid of the panicky fear that seems to invade and dominate your minds in dealing with Russia.

The Oudegeest Resolution was silently dropped.

(From a review by *G.A.H.* of Fred Bramley's pamphlet *Relations with Russia,* in *Labour Monthly,* July, 1925.)

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STOP AMERICAN AG

In New York, 18,000 people rallied to 'Stop the War in Vietnam'; in Tokyo, 30,000 people demonstrated 'against U.S. aggression'; De Gaulle calls it a 'dirty affair' and Indian Premier Shastri calls for an end to U.S. bombing of North Vietnam. Below we show the views of

'The Angel of Peace is ambidextrous'

(Reproduced from *Rinascita*, Italy; Original in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, U.S.A.)

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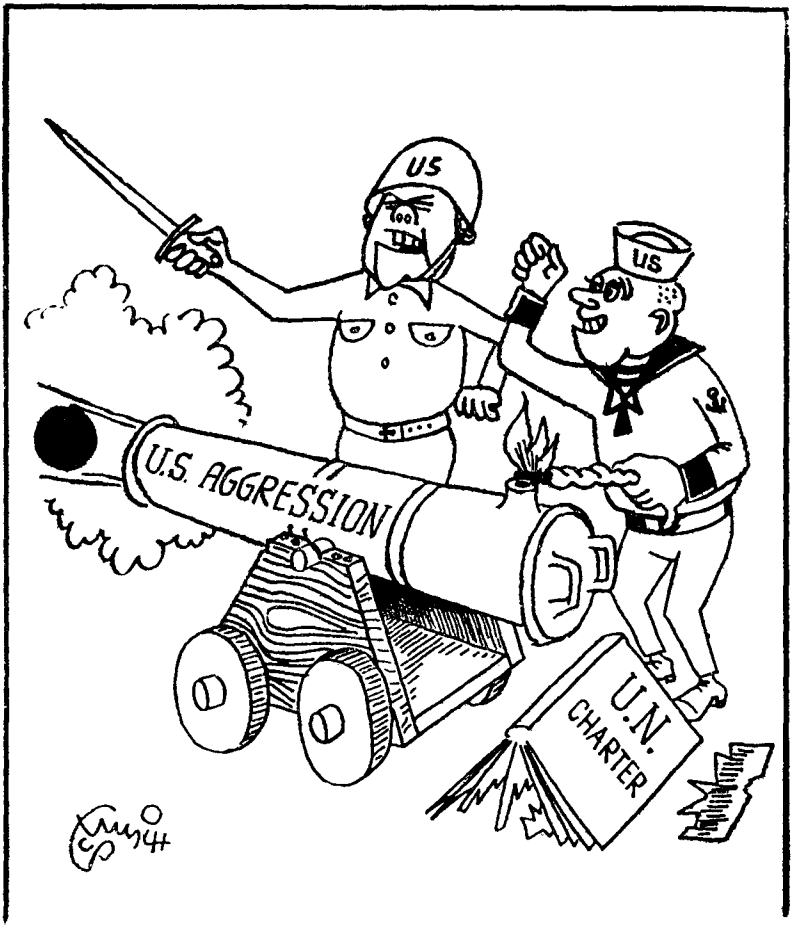
ESSION IN VIETNAM

Pittsburgh and East Berlin in cartoon form. On June 30, the British people will have the opportunity to make their voice heard by participating in the national lobby of Parliament to call on the Government to stop their support of the American policy in Vietnam.



'In the name of freedom and human rights, fire!'

(*Berliner Zeitung, GDR*)

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RACIALISM AND THE LAW

Ralph Millner, Q.C.

FOR ordinary, reasonable people there is no 'problem' of 'race relations'—to them, other people, whatever their colour, race, or ethnic or national backgrounds, are simply other human beings like themselves. Racialism, the evil anti-human idea that some people are 'superior' while others are 'inferior' has no place in their thinking. Unfortunately, however, it does have a place in the thinking—and in the conduct—of some people, and therefore there is now widespread recognition of the fact that, while the main struggle against racialism must obviously be the political one, laws specifically directed against it are also needed.

It is therefore necessary to consider whether the Labour Government's proposals for legislation on race relations, now before Parliament, are satisfactory and (if not) how they should be improved. Racialism, in practice, takes broadly three forms: (1) incitement to racial hatred, (2) the use of insulting or other offensive words or conduct towards persons of particular race or colour, and (3) actual discrimination in day to day life practised against individuals on the ground of their race or colour. The Government's Bill deals (though not entirely satisfactorily) with the first of these, it shies away from making any real attempt to deal with the second, and as regards the third, the Bill is now to be amended so as to substitute a cumbersome 'conciliation' machinery for criminal prosecution.

Under the heading 'incitement to racial hatred' the Bill proposes to create a new criminal offence, based upon the publication or distribution of written matter, or the use of words in a public place or at a public meeting, but the offence is defined in such a way as to provide too many loop-holes for the racialists. To secure a conviction, it will be necessary for the prosecution to prove 4 things, viz:

(i) that the accused acted 'with intent' to stir up racial hatred ; and

(ii) that (with that intent) he published or distributed the written matter or used the words ; and

(iii) that the written matter was (or the words were) 'threatening, abusive or insulting' ; and

(iv) that the written matter was (or the words were) also 'likely to' stir up racial hatred.

Why should the prosecution have so many hurdles to overcome? If what the accused has published or said was likely to stir up racial hatred, why should it have to be also 'threatening, abusive or insult-

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ing'? Furthermore, why should it be necessary to prove, additionally, that the accused acted with an actual 'intent' to stir up racial hatred, if he deliberately published or said words which are 'likely to' stir it up? In short, the offence should be defined in simpler terms, and limited to the essential ingredients. Thus, 'a person shall be guilty of an offence if he publishes or distributes written matter, or uses in any public place or at any public meeting words, *either* with intent, *or* which are likely, to stir up racial hatred'.

The Bill also contains a procedural barrier against prosecutions for incitement to racial hatred. No prosecution is to be instituted except by, or with the consent of, the Attorney-General. There seems to be no good reason why this new, important offence should be added to the list of miscellaneous offences (ranging from offences under the Official Secrets Act to the noisome offence of dumping oil into a harbour) for which the Attorney-General's consent is necessary. As a general rule, it is a constitutional right of the individual in Britain to institute a criminal prosecution, if he can produce the necessary evidence before the court.

The second form of racialism, i.e. insulting words or conduct, is not separately dealt with by this Bill, but only incidentally as part of the offence of incitement to racial hatred. The Government seems to take the view that the existing law is sufficient, and appears to be content to rely principally upon the notorious section 5 of the Public Order Act, 1936, although everyone is aware that the section has been used by the police far more against the left than against fascists, whose activities were the occasion for the introduction of the Public Order Act.

Section 5 of the Public Order Act reads as follows:

> Any person who in any public place or at any public meeting uses threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour with intent to provoke a breach of the peace or whereby a breach of the peace is likely to be occasioned, shall be guilty of an offence.

Mark the simplicity of this, compared with the new offence of incitement to racial hatred, mentioned above. Here there is no need to prove *both* an intent *and* a likelihood to provoke a breach of the peace; one or the other is sufficient. Obviously, there is nothing in the section to compel the police to use it against racialists, rather than against the opponents of racialism.

Experience has shown that what is needed to deal with racialism is a sharp law, aimed directly against this particular evil, and not the 'neutral' approach of section 5 of the Public Order Act. It should be made an offence to use insulting, etc., words or behaviour of a

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racialist kind. The Home Secretary seemed to express his support for the 'neutralist' approach when he said, in the Commons: 'Basically, this Bill is concerned with public order'. Many people hoped that, basically, the Bill would be concerned with stamping out racialism.

Incidentally, there can be no justification for including in this Bill an amendment (which has nothing at all to do with racialism) of section 5 of the Public Order Act, intended to widen the scope of that provision.

Discrimination against individuals is no doubt the most difficult form of racialism for the law to deal with. The Bill, when introduced into the House of Commons, proposed to make it a criminal offence to discriminate on racial grounds against any person seeking access to or facilities or services at certain places of public resort, such as hotels and restaurants, theatres, public transport vehicles and other places. Even in that form it was severely criticised mainly on two grounds: namely, that it contained no provisions for dealing with discrimination in employment or (with some very limited exceptions) housing, and prosecutions could be instituted only by the Director of Public Prosecutions. Now, the Bill is to be radically altered, to keep racial discrimination out of the sphere of the criminal law.

In the first place, the original provisions of the Bill, making it a punishable offence for any person, such as an hotel proprietor, etc., to discriminate against anyone on racial grounds, are to be entirely deleted. Secondly, it seems that isolated acts of discrimination are not to be made unlawful; it is only if a person 'practises discrimination' that the law will frown on him. And even then, how mild that frown will be! The most important part of the Government's new proposals is the introduction of conciliation machinery. The method of dealing with cases of unlawful discrimination is to be by complaint to 'local conciliation committees'. The committee receiving a complaint must make inquiries and try to secure a 'settlement' of differences and obtain satisfactory assurances against further unlawful discrimination. Failure by the local committee, or non-compliance with an assurance given, must be reported to a central 'Race Relations Board', which must further consider the matter and, if it considers that there has been unlawful discrimination and that it is likely to continue, the Board must report the matter to the Attorney-General. That officer may then, if he thinks fit, institute civil proceedings for an injunction; and if that is obtained but not obeyed, it would follow, under the general law, that there might be 'contempt'

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proceedings, resulting in the offender being put in prison for failure to obey a Court's order.

This method of dealing with discrimination seems to be running away from the problem. Conciliation machinery obviously has its uses and is very desirable, but not as a substitute for criminal proceedings. If these proposals go through* the publican who simply refuses to serve a person with a drink on the ground of his colour will not face the risk of prosecution on that ground. Instead, his simple (but indefensible) act, which could be simply and firmly punished by the local magistrate's court, will only have the effect of setting in motion this lumbering machinery, *via* a local committee, the central Race Relations Board, the Attorney-General's Office, the civil courts, and, finally, the machinery for enforcement of court orders.

One last word: if the Government insist upon conciliation machinery in preference to criminal prosecuton, there seems no reason why they should not now include some provision for bringing discrimination in employment and housing within the scope of the conciliation procedure.

*At the time of writing, neither the Government's amendments nor the other numerous suggested amendments, have been debated in Parliament.

OBITUARY

Mr. I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson

It was with deep regret that we learned of the death of Mr. I. T. A. Wallace-Johnson, who died on May 10, in a car crash on the road to Winneba in Ghana, where he was to attend the Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference.

At the time that Mr. Wallace-Johnson, only opposition Member in the Sierra Leone House of Representatives and joint leader of the All-Peoples' Congress, was in gaol in 1961, *Labour Monthly* published his article entitled 'Crisis in Sierra Leone', an analysis which was strikingly confirmed by events. He had previously contributed 'Holding Fast to the Rope' in November 1960.

Throughout his life Mr. Wallace-Johnson had been a staunch anti-imperialist and trade union organiser, having helped to found the Sierra Leone section of the African Youth League in 1938, the first political body in that country. He attended the fifth meeting of the Pan African Congress in Manchester in 1945 along with Kwame Nkrumah and Jomo Kenyatta, originally inspired by Dr. Du Bois in 1919 and which was the precursor of the Afro-Asian Solidarity Conference.

Mr. Wallace-Johnson was honoured with a Sierra Leone State Funeral. President Nkrumah of Ghana paid tribute to him, saying 'We mourn the passing of a comrade who died on active service for the freedom and unity of Africa and world peace', and Nigeria's President Azikiwe said of him, 'Africa lost one of its stalwart pioneers in the struggle for human freedom.'

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AFRO-ASIAN PEOPLES SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE, 1965

Pat Sloan

IN the contemporary world, when American imperialism and its lesser brethren are on the offensive in Vietnam, Congo and the Dominican Republic, not to mention their 'peaceful' persecution of Cuba and *coups* on the Brazilian pattern, it is an enormous encouragement to see Africans and Asians gathered together and fully appreciating that the struggle against imperialism is a world-wide phenomenon which embraces not only Africa and Asia, but Latin-America and all progressive forces everywhere.

The Afro-Asian Peoples Solidarity Conference in May at Winneba, Ghana, included official delegates from all the states that are pursuing a genuinely anti-imperialist policy. It included delegates who represent the opposition in the countries which have succumbed to neo-colonial bribery or pressure. Finally, it included delegates from the still colonial territories and the persecuted majorities in Rhodesia and South Africa.

With this wide variety of countries represented, ranging from the U.S.S.R. and China on the one hand to Vietnam and Angola on the other, the most striking fact about this conference was the high level of unity which it achieved. The tone for this unity was set by the President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, in his opening address which probably marks a record in packing essential ideas into a small space. It covered the following points: The essential contradictions of the world today, 'the conflict between imperialism and the majority of mankind' with its basis in 'economic exploitation . . . the heart of imperialism'.

With this as starting point, Nkrumah then showed the necessity for African unity, Afro-Asian solidarity, the extension of this solidarity to Latin America, and unity with 'progressive people and organisations throughout the world irrespective of race, colour and creed' who 'are mobilised to fight for peace, prosperity and progress'. With this approach, the issue was presented from the very beginning not as a question of race, colour, or even of geography, but as a political issue which must be met as such on a world scale. In conformity with this analysis, racialism was categorically condemned: 'We are neither racists nor racialists . . . although we happen to be non-white in overwhelming numbers' while 'imperialism today oper-

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ates from countries where the peoples are predominantly white'. In the speech, Nkrumah also paid due attention to the economic basis, both of imperialism, and of the struggle against imperialism which involves the solution of a whole series of economic problems by the newly independent countries.

It was a remarkable achievement that, while in the Commission there was some protracted controversy, all the resolutions of the Conference were in the end unanimous and not a word was said in dissent from this final outcome. From now on there will be changes in organisation so that the former Afro-Asian movement shall become an Afro-Asian-Latin-American movement. In the course of the Conference, and in deference to the particular importance of Latin-America, the Cuban observer, though neither African nor Asian, was permitted to speak. As to other non-Asian socialist countries, it was finally agreed that they should be allowed to send observers to Conferences of the movement.

If *unity* can therefore be characterised as the main achievement of the Conference, the *breadth of outlook* on which this unity has been based is the second achievement. Nkrumah set the tone for this in his opening speech when he appealed, in relation to countries in which the progressive forces are not yet united, for the admission of delegates from more than one political organisation so long as they were, when judged 'by their programmes and activities, anti-imperialist, anti-colonialist, anti-neo-colonialist and anti-racialist'. This formulation was accepted by the Conference.

In its final resolutions the Conference Commissions worked out a programme which would be a heavy organisational burden on any Secretariat. The antithesis is made clear between 'racial discrimination and exploitation' and 'all progressive people of the world'. All the remaining colonial governments are denounced by name, and a boycott urged against such imperialist *place d'armes* as Israel, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia and against the weakest link in the imperialist states at this stage, Portugal.

The United Nations is warned to 'correct its mistakes and return to principles of its Charter' or otherwise 'we must re-organise it so that it can reflect the will of the peoples'.

The expansion of economic co-operation with the socialist world 'on the basis of equal and mutual benefit' is called for, while limiting 'economic relations with imperialist countries without severing relations with them entirely and without any conditions'. The building up of the 'public sector' of the economy is advocated, together with the nationalisation of foreign properties 'with or without compensation'.

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The role of the trade unions was stressed in the resolution from the cultural commission with stress on trade union effort to 'build a national and independent economy' and the proposal to convene an Afro-Asian Trade Union Conference.

The proceedings of the Conference and its final decisions are remarkable examples of how countries and movements which are at very different stages of development and which differ enormously in geography, climate and history, can be united on common ground when their differences are subordinated to a common purpose. The role of Ghana in helping to forge this unity should be fully recognised: President Nkrumah's opening speech, Minister of Information Welbeck's chairmanship, and the speech of Minister of Education Boateng as leader of the Ghana delegation, were all evidence of this fact.

COAL, OIL AND BRITAIN

IN the February Notes under the above title we wrote:

> The significance of this oil-based, that is, colonialist dominance in the character of contemporary British monopoly capitalism is far-reaching, equally for British foreign policy and strategy, for the balance of payments, and for the internal economic balance and development or lack of development. Nothing is more sedulously concealed, confused or tucked away under misleading headings than the role of colonialist oil exploitation in the British economic structure. (p. 56)

On the basis of available figures we ventured to suggest the following estimate:

> If we accept these figures as correct, it means that half the cost of Britain's oil imports are covered by the overseas 'invisible' earnings of the oil monopolies. No wonder that on this basis oil is found 'more economic' than home production.

The *Economist* of May 15, under the title 'What Oil Costs Britain' has endeavoured to work out its estimate with regard to this. The article confirms the deliberate policy of official secrecy on this subject:

> 'We are, of course, aware of the immensely important contribution which the British oil companies make to our economy and the balance of payments', said a Government spokesman in the Finance Bill debate this week. Whitehall is aware; but in fact it does its best to make sure nobody else is. The 'oil balance of payments' is never published, and deliberately blurred out of official statistics. Here are some unofficial estimates.

On the basis of these 'unofficial estimates', the *Economist* reaches the conclusion:

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On the rough estimates of this table for 1963, the effect of having two of the largest oil companies in the world was that the country managed to get its very large imports of oil, in terms of foreign exchange, for about a third of the 'going' price. Net oil imports involving an outgoing of around £300 million in foreign exchange were in fact obtained for foreign exchange outgoings of the order of £100 million. There was a time, indeed back in the happy fifties, when in foreign exchange terms Britain was getting its oil free.

When we ventured to suggest that Britain was getting its oil (which was knocking out the coal industry) at half the real cost in foreign exchange, this was widely regarded as a wildly exaggerated surmise. Now this calculation of the *Economist* would indicate that in fact Britain has been getting 'its very large imports of oil, in terms of foreign exchange for about a third of the "going" price', and that in the 1950s 'in foreign exchange terms Britain was getting its oil free'.

It is important that this colonialist basis of the rôle of oil in Britain's economy, and its effects on the rest of the economy, should be widely understood, not only among those working in the coal industry, who are most directly affected, but also by all the economists and journalists who speak so glibly of 'inevitable' processes of technical change as the sole explanation of the problems arising, and also by the whole labour movement faced with the costs of Mr. Wilson's 'East of Suez' policies.

R.P.D.

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(*A. L. Morton*)

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STUDENTS IN ACTION

Phil Goodwin

(Following on the articles in the May and June Labour Monthly, analysing the changes taking place in the student movement and the prospects for advancing their needs, we are pleased to publish an article by a student of University College London showing the extent and militancy of student activities.—Ed., LM.)

THE two previous articles have discussed the trends that are transforming the atmosphere of academic apathy and obsessive individualism in the colleges and universities to one of interest in and action on many important political and social questions. Students have been concerned especially with three problems: the struggle for peace; international solidarity, including the fight against racialism and apartheid; and the struggle for improvements in students' own conditions and for a better education system.

Although C.N.D. and other organisations with progressive peace policies have a degree of continuous support from the students, the most striking action for peace has been of the 'crisis' type. At least half the demonstrations in the first week of the Cuba crisis were largely of students—now, the war in Vietnam is having an important effect. There have been student protests in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Strathclyde, Hull, Manchester, Sheffield, Nottingham, York, Keele, Birmingham, Cambridge, Oxford, Cardiff and Bristol. Especially of note are Sussex and University College London where the students' union have passed progressive resolutions 'officially'; the Leeds 'Vietnam Protest Week' with a march and a vigil, and Southampton's five hundred strong protest meeting sparked off by the visit of Patrick Gordon Walker. Teacher training college and technical college students, less active in the past on this type of issue, have also responded—in Loughborough training college a joint staff-student letter was signed by two hundred, and there was a medical aid collection. At Regent Street Polytechnic a staff-student petition was signed by four hundred. The Labour Student Organisation, N.A.L.S.O., asked Ho Chi Minh to be honorary Vice-President at their last annual conference. A new feature has been the American style 'teach-in', a marathon political meeting putting all points of view. At the first, at University College London, over 20 speakers addressed an audience ranging between 700 and 1,000. American and South Vietnam spokesmen withdrew on the day itself. The meeting reacted against pro-American speakers and overseas stu-

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dents were especially vociferous in condemnation of American policy. A number of other 'teach-ins' have taken place in the provinces, and at the recent event in Oxford both Mr. Michael Stewart and Mr. Cabot Lodge spoke. To crown all this activity against the war in Vietnam, participation in the national lobby of Parliament on June 30 is expected to be very great.

Students in this country are quick to respond to the suppression of students' rights and organisations by reactionary governments. Chelsea College first focussed attention on the plight of Iraqi students in this country who have had their grants withdrawn by the Iraqi government. Subsequently, Leeds, Newcastle, Manchester and U.C.L., and the Council of the National Union of Students,* voiced their concern, and—more important—at West Ham Technical College the students gave a grant to the Iraqis affected.

Similarly the suppression of student movements in Spain and Portugal has been condemned by several student Unions, and by the Scottish Union of Students and the National Union of Students; though the motions that have been passed have yet to be transformed into practical solidarity.

The recent struggles of American students have struck a chord also—at Strathclyde University in Scotland, for example, the Students' Union voted to dissociate itself from the award given by the University to Dr. Clark Kerr, who gained fame recently for his efforts to interfere with the progressive activity of the students at Berkeley, California.

But it is in their opposition to apartheid that students have made the best contribution. Two torchlight processions have been held in London; the second, last December, with five thousand marching from thirty-five London Colleges and nine other Universities. Many Student Unions supported this demonstration, quite exceptionally, though the press ignored it. Students took part in other demonstrations in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Nottingham and Southampton for the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners. University College London elected Mandela to the position of honorary Vice-President of the Union as a gesture of respect, and the same week organised a rally of fifteen hundred students to launch a collection to allow a South African to study in this country. The two thousand pounds needed was collected in six weeks, and the subsequent arrest of the student selected was a cause of much concern. Leeds University Union also elected Mandela to an honorary

*Of England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

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position—and decided to boycott a ceremony giving an award to South African millionaire Oppenheimer.

Student scholarships for South Africans, of the kind previously mentioned, have been—and are—very important. Thirteen universities have scholarships and there are four in the process of being set up. This sort of positive combination of moral gesture and material help, many students feel, is more constructive than the traditional type of demonstration.

Students have acted also against racialism in this country; the London School of Economics Union organised a boycott of the 'Whisky a Gogo' club which was operating a colour bar; Leeds Union barred Peter Griffiths, Smethwick M.P., from entering the building, and students at Leicester took the initiative in setting up an all-city organisation to combat discrimination.

For a number of years, many active left-wing students tended to neglect the conditions of students themselves, and the restrictions that affect their freedom especially in the teacher training colleges, and Oxford and Cambridge. This is no longer true and there is wide concern over the inadequacy of student grants, the undemocratic effects of the Means Test, the shortage of student lodgings and so on. But while innumerable students' unions have passed motions and resolutions on these topics, *action* in this field—the 100 per cent successful refectory boycott for better food at Westminster College, for example—has been limited. Many college unions have held protest meetings and seen their M.P.s about the application to student grants of the Means Test, whose abolition was promised by the Labour Party during the election.

There has been attention focussed on the educational system as a whole. In the 1963 'Education Year' the London training colleges organised a forum and, with the University, a march of three hundred, and U.C.L. produced a film for use in the campaign. Goldsmiths College students produced two thousand copies of a pamphlet protesting 'In 1963 more money is spent on advertising and expense accounts than on education'.

But this year there has been an intensification of activity by the training college students, especially on the issue of providing a decent wage for teachers. A campaign starting in the Manchester area with a big meeting there, culminated in a national lobby of Parliament in March. Two thousand five hundred students from all over the country attended a protest meeting, and lobbied in the snow afterwards.

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The art colleges have been more active, organising two lobbies against the contraction of art education, that has been Government policy. N.A.L.S.O. recently organised an eighty-strong 'march on Eton' which, though small, marks an increased interest by this organisation in taking action on its generally left-wing Labour policies.

There are, I believe, three important conclusions to be drawn from these facts. First, a new militancy has begun to develop among students, both in formulating demands and also in pursuing them. This undermines the class basis of Tory support among professional people.

Second, the type of activity is significant. There are marches, meetings and petitions of course—often these are the only available means. But there are also boycotts, lobbies, the awarding of honorary positions, scholarships, even pamphlet and film-making, and many more. Most important, there is the diverse character of mass activity; the Vietnam committees that have been set up in many universities are broad, including conservatives, Christian groups and others who would not describe themselves as 'left wing'.

Third, the extent of the activity. Though the traditional political activity of students has been easier in the universities, examples of this new militancy are to be found as often as not in the art colleges, teacher training colleges and technical colleges which contain a majority of all students, and a greater proportion from working-class families.

'ANGER' TO DESPAIR: TEN YEARS OF ENGLISH DRAMA

Stuart Douglass

TEN years ago John Osborne was presenting his play 'Look Back in Anger' to the Royal Court Theatre. Joan Littlewood at Stratford East was preparing to launch Shelagh Delaney and Brendan Behan. Arnold Wesker's trilogy was just round the corner. The air was electric with new playwrights and their works. It was one of the most exciting periods for the English theatre in this century.

Several things had provoked this welcome injection of progressive thought into a stale, commercial theatre: among them, the bomb and the upsurging C.N.D. movement; disillusion created by the post-

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war Labour Government and the return to Toryism with all its archaic standards; and the realisation that there was no prosperity plan for a vast proportion of the British people—it was to be the same old pattern of life with the cold war and the threat of nuclear nightmare to boot. It was time for dramatists to state their protest. And Theatre Managers were on the look out for new box-office attractions to restock coffers that had been depleted by a series of dramatic fiascos.

As soon as the new era arrived its bourgeois critics started to organise an opposition. Immediately the words 'kitchen sink drama' became part of the language of theatre-goers. The implication was that writers had turned their backs on beauty and dignity and were wallowing in filth. In fact the filth they were exposing was the outdated capitalist values with all their inhuman undertones. But the new movement was too powerful to be done to death with words and it thrived, attracting working class writers who started to bridge great distances between whole sections of working class life in Great Britain and bring a fresh understanding of mutual problems.

It seemed as if the old era of drawing-room drama was over. John Osborne started it by tearing down the bourgeois citadel of sterile, static, stagnant imperialist ethics. His conflicts presented middle-class young people at war with a pernicious gathering of brutal, pompous values. He burst innumerable bubbles of upper-class ideology and showed correctly that this had permeated into sections of working class thought.

John Osborne and his disciples had exposed the rot and it was time for a writer of constructive conscience to express the will of ordinary people to build a better life. Arnold Wesker shouldered his way into the ring for round two. His 'Chicken Soup with Barley', 'Roots' and 'I'm Talking About Jerusalem' resounded with the impulse to live, love and create. His characters grappled with complex issues with a deep respect for the humanitarianism of Socialist principles.

The new movement spread to literature and the film and television screen. Alan Sillitoe broke fresh ground with 'Saturday Night and Sunday Morning', Clive Exton caused some mighty explosions, and David Mercer appeared, to invest the Yorkshire air with its true dignity. But somehow, somewhere, with all the realism and energy that was being given to the dramatic scene, something was clearly amiss, and it still is. Instead of consolidating its position, drama has taken a step backwards into obscurity and despair. The battle is

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not yet won. It has been given a pause while Harold Pinter and his imitators indulge in their negative fantasies. The leaders of theatrical fashion concern themselves with such terms as 'The Theatre of the Absurd' and 'The Theatre of Cruelty', entirely missing the point that form is important but content is all. And writers are looking for something new—conceptions that man is philistine and primitive or stupid and passive. What has happened?

The seeds of this retrogression were already there when the new movement started. There was no absolute political thinker among the ranks of the new writers to light up the path for ordinary people, no Shavian intellect to present a firm plan for the emancipation of the human race. The dramatists who led the revolt fell just that short of being giants in their day. The germs of the despair were gathering like bacteria around the edges of their important works.

Osborne himself shows an impressive understanding of the pressures that suffocate the middle-class creative young artist-intellectual, but he is a bourgeois himself, and shows himself to be incapable of any depth of understanding when he analyses the lower-middle or working-class character. An ordinary person could see 'Look Back in Anger' and identify himself completely with the passions of Jimmy Porter. But when the suburban family came under Osborne's scrutiny in his later plays they were simply a hangover from the attitudes of the drawing-room drama. No attempt was made to extend to these people an analysis of the conditions that had motivated their behaviour. They were the old caricatures drawn even more ruthlessly than any of the pre-war patronising bourgeois writers would have dared. This detracted from Osborne's vital minute examination of the ruling-class philosophy. It gave his hero a god-like individual quality which was unreal.

Wesker very nearly seized the chance of a lifetime. Very nearly—but not quite. Osborne had torn down the citadel. The road was clear for the designer and bricklayer who would construct the new one. The trouble was that Wesker was not absolutely clear about his Socialism. He felt with an emotional certainty that Socialism was the answer but he could never back it up with a logical blueprint. The doubts he expressed were mainly emotional doubts which could easily be cleared by a careful Marxist study of the facts, but one was left with the feeling that when emotion reigned in a Wesker play, no fact could intervene. He *felt* his Communist family deeply. They all came alive and one warmed to them but perhaps what was lacking was Osborne's ability to analyse objectively the conditions

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affecting his own class. Osborne's effect was derived from a clinical reasoning. Wesker's came from an instinctive feeling.

Of course without being able to give the true and complete Socialist alternative, Wesker was compelled to *find* an alternative. He discovered it in the trials of a young working class boy who was 'gifted' with a 'superior' artistic and cultural understanding. His subsequent theme was 'if only the working classes could see and appreciate the beauty and joy of living—like me. If they could all become cultured and learn to express themselves. They had it once, you know, in their old songs and customs. But we've taken that away from them'.

There is some truth somewhere in this statement but unfortunately it carries with it such an air of patronage that it loses much of its significance. At the same time it refuses to accept certain elementary features of modern culture and divorces Wesker from great masses of people, mostly young people—the very ones he should be appealing to. But, there is great validity in working to fulfil the desire for people to live an unfettered existence with developed cultural amenities and Wesker's Centre 42 deserves every scrap of help it can get. Even with the shortcomings, however, Wesker remains head and shoulders above his contemporaries. If I have tended to underline too heavily his concentration on 'the ethereal' and his lack of direction I cannot underwrite sufficiently the importance and value of his writings to the development of the British theatre. Osborne blew away the cobwebs but left some pretty rusty old nails hanging around. Wesker pulled out the nails and laid some fairly concrete foundations. He took the humanitarian values and gave them a noble aspect, declaring the true worth of a human being. His faith was foremost, yet sometimes it seemed to drag its political reasoning behind it like a willing old porpoise.

But these things are not determined by some special cultural design. Osborne and Wesker grew out of the elements that shaped and prepared them for their great work. When the full effect of their early work could be felt and examined we asked ourselves 'Where are we now?' Certainly the citadel had been breached, but many shibboleths remained. Certainly a new believable, real human being walked the stage, shouting his protest, airing his problem, but where was he walking. Nobody had produced a plan for him. He might as well be walking to his own destruction.

The entry of gladiator Pinter into the theatrical arena was at first resisted by the big box office moguls. His work was so difficult to

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understand that it must frighten off the paying customers. But suddenly they saw the light. The clientele could attach whatever meaning they liked to Pinter's words. Going to the theatre was suddenly a game of chance ('Well, *you* see what *you* think it means') and his plays became fashionable.

What Pinter says is 'Something is wrong. I don't know what it is but we are being threatened by forces which may have to do with the State, or Big Business, or our mother, or our sex glands, or our inability to talk to each other. But it's mighty wrong and we can't do anything about it.' This is the only statement that is perceptible through the mixture of symbol, repetition, trick and booby trap. This is no step forward. Pinter has in fact drawn the veil over the statements of his predecessors, Osborne and Wesker, who said 'Much of what is wrong is Capitalism and its inhuman values and something must be done to get rid of it.' Pinter stepped backwards and said 'Don't know what it is. *You* guess. But anyway, you're quite helpless'.

Pinter's negative attitude, when it was finally accepted as being a box office attraction, came as a breath of relief to the old-style money bags of the decadent commercial theatre. At last here was something which was not scorned by the highbrow critics and at the same time attracted the shekels—*without* the encumbrance of that nuisance, the young, vibrant, protesting, militant hero. Gone was the message. Or rather—take whatever message you choose. 'Come to the theatre and experience whatever you like. This will puzzle you. Roll up'.

But Pinter was a skilled writer. He took hold of his chance gratefully and proceeded to write plays which created a magical atmosphere. He knew the power of words. He could hang you in space with three simple repetitive phrases. He was the master of macabre surprise. If it were that easy, one could say that his plays stand up as great entertainment simply because of his magic formulae. But it is not that easy. They pretend to be, and they are presented by the fashionable intellectuals of the theatre as being, plays with a deep central message which is a positive comment on life. The comment is negative and opportunist. We know what is wrong. We do not consider it an advance when a playwright tries to extinguish flames which others have taken great pains to ignite.

We enjoy his artistry as we do the several others who have entered this arena in recent years. But mainly these few have treated us to the same theme—the worthlessness of our existence, the brick walls against which we throw ourselves, our hopeless plight, our absurdity,

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our cruelty. And when these plays have been categorised as the 'Theatre of the Absurd' etc., they have been attacked and defended as such, instead of being analysed for the meaning and content they contain. There is no reason why the 'Absurd' and 'Cruel' theatre should not thrive in our midst. Its form is useful when in the interests of people at large, in a progressive, humanitarian sense. What has happened is that our theatre is now in a phase which can best be labelled 'The Theatre of Despair'.

Perhaps, had the earlier Osborne/Wesker signals pointed clearly at 'Go' the theatre would not have taken such an agonised turn. At least it would have given the green light to the playwright whose heart bounded with hope for the human race and shown him a straight road ahead. I do not suggest while saying this that it is as simple as it sounds here. There is no one-shot solution to all our ills. If that were so we would be finding it now—and gladly. But there is a clear political analysis on the left (where most of our modern playwrights stand) and writers have not yet recognised that it is the finest flag they can fly. This is for many reasons, not the least of which is the thorough conditioning which a writer undergoes when he meets with today's set-up in the society of the intellectual, tinged as it is with the right-wing attitude towards class problems which parade as the 'liberal' view. There is also the matter of an insidious type of censorship which controls what you can say through the fear of an empty belly. Self-censorship is fast replacing the big blue mark of the censor's pencil.

The anarchist is willingly accepted in the theatre. For a time he can be represented by both sides as a true artist for he is demolishing both points of view. But when the time comes and the critics complain about 'dirty' and 'chaotic' theatre, the right wing uses him to blacken the name of all progressive writers, who demand a change, and decries 'the trend' which is of course any change from the status quo.

However chaotic it may be, the trend is still one of protest and will remain so, mainly due to the efforts of those pioneers of ten years ago. Whatever happens there will be no turning back from this one stand. The old values are in pieces. Progressive writers must be on their guard against a philosophy which provides a breathing space for the old guard, for it is certainly regrouping its forces for a counter attack. The truly Socialist playwright, with all the depth of real, honest, humanitarian, constructive Socialist principles, may already have emerged, may be developing. The peace

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movement, the labour movement, the movement for colonial independence—all have young writers upon whom the passage of events is carving an indelible mark. There is great hope that drama will very soon enter its new phase, a militant, clearsighted era with a distinct vision of the world we can all share.

BOOK REVIEWS

Essays on Economic Policy, Vol. I and Vol. II

Nicholas Kaldor

Duckworth, 1964, 294 and 320 pp. 50*s*. each vol.

ACADEMIC ECONOMISTS, taking the species as a whole, have got themselves a bad name for tedious and esoteric disputation remote from the problems of impoverished and suffering humanity. A good deal of this reputation is well deserved; but such strictures certainly cannot be applied to Kaldor, whose writings are always interesting, stimulating and pertinent to the great economic issues of the day. However much one may disagree with Kaldor—as I personally often do—one always learns from him. His analysis always thrusts before one new considerations that, once seen, cannot be neglected. It is therefore an event of considerable importance that these two volumes have just been published. In them twenty-four essays in all are collected—written for the most part in the last ten years, though one dates back to pre-war and one to war-time. The main topics under which the essays are grouped are full employment, inflation and tax reform in Volume I and international currency and commodity problems, together with some studies of overseas economies, in Volume II.

There is a lot in each of these essays and it is a merit that they marshal the salient aspects of complicated subjects within a reasonable compass. In a short review one can select for comment only a narrow range of topics and—on grounds of topicality as well as interest—my choice goes to the essays on tax reform. As a sample of his refreshing directness, I take the following from his address to a meeting of accountants on the 'Reform of Personal Taxation' (p. 207, Vol. I). 'The present system of taxation in this country . . . is inequitable to a degree that is unknown and unsuspected by the general public and is only realised by experts. . . . If the social value of the services performed by an individual were quantifiable, one might almost argue that there is a clear negative correlation between the social worth of the services performed in earning a particular income, and the tax liability to which it gives rise. . . . We are confronted with the vicious circle of a deteriorating tax system, where the rates of taxation go up and up and the loopholes become larger and larger, so that the State is charging all the time more and more on less and less. Every year new loopholes are opened. It is true that some loopholes are closed by successive Finance Acts but, taken by and large, the loopholes that are closed in the tax system by special anti-avoidance provisions are small in importance compared with the loopholes that are newly opened through fresh concessions presented in response to pressure of vested interests.'

Kaldor combines a wide experience with an ingenious and subtle mind which he has applied to the techni-

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calities of taxation. Kaldor's views on the 'value-added tax' are of particular interest. This is a tax on sales minus purchases of components, raw materials, fuel, etc. The particular virtue of this form of tax is that it taps the surplus (roughly speaking gross profit plus wages) as it is made, and its very imposition necessitates a watch over the flow of work through the economy as a whole. This in turn enhances the control of public authority.

However, he is under no illusions about the difficulty of changing tax policies for the better. In the introduction to Volume I he writes of recommendations he has made to various Governments on tax reform (p. xviii). '. . . Since I invariably urged the adoption of reforms which put more of the burden of taxation on the privileged minority of the well-to-do, and not only on the broad masses of the population, it earned me (and the Governments I advised) a lot of unpopularity, without, I fear, always succeeding in making the property owning classes contribute substantial amounts to the public purse. The main reason for this . . . undoubtedly lay in the fact that the power, behind the scenes, of the wealthy property owning classes and business interests, proved to be very much greater than the responsible political functionaries (whether Presidents, Prime Ministers or Ministers of Finance) suspected.'

And, of course, in Britain things will not be different for Kaldor as economic adviser to the Treasury. Implementation of better economic policies will be possible as a result only of strong and sustained pressure by trade unions and other mass organisations, which themselves need to be guided by careful and perceptive analysis of the issues involved.

J. EATON.

The Government of Great Britain
Graeme Moodie

Methuen University Paperbacks.
214 pp. 8s. 6d.

Introduction to Politics
Dorothy M. Pickles

Methuen University Paperbacks.
224 pp. 9s. 6d.

MR. MOODIE'S book is intended as one of a series on different countries arranged so as to lend themselves to comparative studies. So that emphasis is often given to facts which are taken for granted here, but which have significance for foreign students. For instance, 'the divisions within the British population which matter politically are based on occupation and class rather than race or religion'. Or 'the British people are divided by a complex system of social stratification of which they are highly conscious. In addition to the separation imposed by differences of occupation and income common to most societies, they are further kept apart by differences in accent, appearance, and manner to an extent rarely found in, say, the United States'.

This sort of thing is enlivening rather than the reverse, and though the concentration throughout on the mechanics of Government rather than the political lifeblood produces a somewhat dehydrated result, the book is, by and large, fair, shrewd and accurate.

This cannot be said for Mrs. Pickles, whose 'introduction to politics' is an introduction to a political fog. What can be said for a book which asserts that Marxism denies the possibility of peaceful change, that Marxism denies the significance of a particular country's history, custom, or tradition; that Marxists want a dictatorship of the minority; and which is obsessed with

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an agonising dilemma about how far to grant Communists democratic rights, using Arthur Deakin's ban on Communists in the Transport and General as an example of this dilemma?

The students of Morley College, to whom this book is dedicated, will have to do a lot of homework if they want to grope their way out of this fog, since their amiable teacher has evidently not bothered with it.

KATHERINE HOOD.

Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations

Karl Marx

Edited and introduced by Eric Hobsbawm

Translated by Jack Cohen

Lawrence & Wishart. 152 pp. 25*s.*

THIS IMPORTANT WORK of Marx, now made available for the first time for English readers, is drawn from the larger manuscript, written by him in 1857-58, in preparation for the *Critique of Political Economy* and *Kapital.* Although extracts had appeared in the *Neue Zeit* in 1903, the actual manuscript was published for the first time in Moscow in 1939-41, and in Berlin in 1953.

The present section of this larger work, here published under the title of *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations,* is supplemented by texts from the *German Ideology* and letters of Marx, and a most valuable introduction by Eric Hobsbawm which helps to put the treatment into perspective and eases the reader's path into Marx's penetrating depth of thought.

This illuminating study, drawn from the key period of Marx's theoretical economic work in the preparation of the *Critique of Political Economy* deals with the still highly controversial questions of the preceding forms of economy and stages of economic development before capitalist society. This study is not presented as a final work for publication, but is in the form of notes and observations on the character of the preceding stages of economy which prepared the conditions for capitalism. The analysis was necessarily limited by the stage of research and information available at the time; and it is evident that Marx had made the closest study of the available work and materials in this field. During the succeeding century fresh research and archaeological discoveries have enormously enlarged the scope of what is known; and it is the special value of Hobsbawm's introduction that he is able to bring Marxist treatment into relation to this subsequent knowledge and the many controversies which have developed (especially on the conception of the 'Asiatic mode of production') and are still in process of discussion among Marxists and other historians.

R.P.D.

NATSOPA—Seventy-Five Years

James Moran

Heinemann. 154 pp. 30s.

THE NATIONAL SOCIETY OF OPERATIVE PRINTERS (Natsopa) was formed in 1889 following a strike of printers' assistants (the men who 'laid-on' the paper to the machines) who claimed an increase of wages from 12s.-14s. for a 54 hour week, to £1, and who had their headquarters in a coffee house in Clerkenwell Green.

This movement was part of the upsurge of unorganised, low-paid workers expressed in the strikes of gasworkers, of the match girls and of the dockers, which took place that year. Since then Natsopa has organised the increasing number of

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workers needed to man the rotary presses that print the national newspapers and other printworkers not catered for by the craft unions.

Its history has been bedevilled by demarcation disputes. Nevertheless it has raised the status and improved the conditions of its members enormously and emerged victorious from many struggles with the employers. Under George Isaacs, General Secretary for many years, the union nationally backed the right wing of the Labour Party but the rank and file played a big part in the pre-war anti-fascist struggles and, since Richard Briginshaw became General Secretary in 1951, the union has strongly opposed German Re-armament and Britain's entry into the Common Market and advocated a cut in the arms programme.

To mark the Union's seventy-fifth anniversary, Mr. James Moran has written a very lively and readable history of the Union.

KAY BEAUCHAMP.

The True Society: A Philosophy of Labour

Frank Tannenbaum

Jonathan Cape. 200 pp. 21s.

THIS BOOK DESCRIBES trade unions in the U.S.A., their power, their rôle, and their probable future development in U.S. society. But its description, its quotations, and its prognoses are all fourteen years old, for it was written in 1950-51. This is an almost fatal defect, which becomes amusing only when the author turns to explain why the U.S.S.R. will never be able to do much of what it has in fact done since this book was written.

D. N. PRITT.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

Was Stalin Really Necessary?, Alec Nove. Allen & Unwin. 316 pp. 35s.
Steel, Vernon Thomas and Albert Kitts. Lincolns-Prager. 48 pp. 2s. 6d.
A Faith to Fight For, Eric Deakins. Victor Gollancz, 174 pp. 18s.
British Defence Policy & Nuclear War, Emanuel J. de Kadt. Frank Cass & Co. 148 pp. 21s.
Efficiency, Equality and the Ownership of Property, J. E. Meade, C.B. Allen & Unwin. 96 pp. 21s.
Marxism Today, R. Conquest. Ampersand Books. 88 pp. 3s. 6d.
The Sino-Soviet Rift, William E. Griffith. Allen & Unwin. 508 pp. 63s.
The Politics of Conscience, Melvin Richter. Weidenfeld & Nicolson. 416 pp. 50s.
Harold Wilson: A Pictorial Biography, Michael Foot. Penguin. 100 pp. 12s. 6d.
Local Government in Ghana, J. K. Nsarkoh. Oxford University Press. 310 pp. 21s.
The Principle of National Self, G. Starudenko. Central Books. 240 pp. 2s. 6d.
Nigerian Political Parties, Richard L. Sklar. Princeton University Press. 578 pp. 100s.
From Ankara to Marrakesh, Hans. E. Tütsch. Allen & Unwin. 224 pp. 30s.

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This point is appreciated by several readers, who have made sure that our fund is not forgotten despite the extra calls made on time and money when preparing and budgeting for holidays: 'My donation is earlier than usual' writes a London reader 'knowing the job *LM* has to do on a shoe-string, I couldn't enjoy myself with a clear conscience if I forgot the fund'.

A young reader found the articles on the student movement in May and June issues became talking-points for discussion when shown to fellow students. 'Apart from the good impression these articles made' he writes, 'I've found them very useful as an introduction to *LM*. I'm adding a small gift to help the lean holiday period!'

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Helen Falber.

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